

U.S. Patent Application No. 10/532,750
Amendment dated March 5, 2008
Reply to Office Action of December 6, 2007

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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently amended) A method for producing a tantalum or niobium powder in which a metal salt containing tantalum or niobium is reduced in a diluent salt to obtain a tantalum or niobium powder,

wherein the total percentage of moisture in the metal salt and the diluent salt is 0.2% by mass or less as determined by the Karl Fisher Fischer method based on an amount of moisture generated by heating the metal salt and the diluent salt to 600°C, minus the total percentage of said moisture as determined by the Karl Fischer method at 200° C.

2. (Currently amended) A method for producing tantalum or niobium powder according to claim 1, wherein the diluent salt is potassium fluoride or a mixture containing potassium fluoride, and the moisture percentage in potassium fluoride alone is 0.15% by mass or less, as determined by the Karl Fisher Fischer method.

3. (Currently amended) A method for producing tantalum or niobium powder according to claim 1, wherein the diluent salt is potassium chloride or a mixture containing potassium chloride, and the moisture percentage in potassium chloride alone is 0.05% by mass or less, as determined by the Karl Fisher Fischer method.

4. (Currently amended) A method for producing tantalum or niobium powder according to claim 1, wherein the metal salt is tantalum potassium fluoride, and the moisture percentage in tantalum

U.S. Patent Application No. 10/532,750
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potassium fluoride alone is 0.1% by mass or less, as determined by the Karl Fischer Fischer method.

5. (Currently amended) A method for producing tantalum or niobium powder according to claim 1, wherein the metal salt is niobium potassium fluoride, and the moisture percentage in potassium fluoride alone is 0.1% by mass or less, as determined by the Karl Fischer Fischer method.

6. (Withdrawn) An anode for an electrolytic capacitor comprising the metal powder produced by the method of claim 1.

7. (Withdrawn) A method for evaluating a metal salt containing tantalum or niobium used for producing a tantalum or niobium powder, wherein a moisture percentage in a metal salt is measured based on an amount of moisture which is generated by heating the metal salt to 600°C or more.

8. (Withdrawn) A method for evaluating a diluent salt used for producing a tantalum or niobium powder, wherein a moisture percentage in a diluent salt is measured based on an amount of moisture which is generated by heating the diluent salt to 600°C or more.

9. (New) A method for producing a tantalum or niobium powder in which a metal salt containing tantalum or niobium is reduced in a diluent salt to obtain a tantalum or niobium powder,

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wherein the total percentage of moisture based on crystal water and absorbed water in the metal salt and the diluent salt is 0.2% by mass or less as determined by the Karl Fischer method based on an amount of moisture measured after first removing moisture at 200° C and then generated by heating the metal salt and the diluent salt to 600°C.

10. (New) A method for producing tantalum or niobium powder according to claim 9, wherein the diluent salt is potassium fluoride or a mixture containing potassium fluoride, and the moisture percentage in potassium fluoride alone is 0.15% by mass or less, as determined by the Karl Fischer method.

11. (New) A method for producing tantalum or niobium powder according to claim 9, wherein the diluent salt is potassium chloride or a mixture containing potassium chloride, and the moisture percentage in potassium chloride alone is 0.05% by mass or less, as determined by the Karl Fischer method.

12. (New) A method for producing tantalum or niobium powder according to claim 9, wherein the metal salt is tantalum potassium fluoride, and the moisture percentage in tantalum potassium fluoride alone is 0.1% by mass or less, as determined by the Karl Fischer method.

13. (New) A method for producing tantalum or niobium powder according to claim 9, wherein the metal salt is niobium potassium fluoride, and the moisture percentage in potassium fluoride alone is 0.1% by mass or less, as determined by the Karl Fischer method.